Short Service Commission to Naval sailors

†3599. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to grant Short Service Commission to the sailors in Navy who are professional license holders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of officers likely to be granted this Commission?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) As per the existing Rules, sailors in the Navy including professional license holders are eligible to apply for Short Service Commission if they fulfill the prescribed age and educational criteria. There are no earmarked vacancies. Those sailors who qualify in Services Selection Board on the basis of their merit, are granted Short Service Commission.

Expansion of Nathula Pass Roads

†3600. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the proposed Indo-Chinese trade *via* Nathula Pass any scheme for the expansion of roads at the Nathula Pass and its adjoining areas, is under consideration;

(b) whether any action plan has been sent to the Government by the Sikkim Government in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action being taken by the Central Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Joint Statement signed by the two Prime Ministers during the visit of the Chinese Premier to India in April 2005 noted that both sides reviewed with satisfaction the implementation of the memorandum on the border trade through the Nathula Pass. Double laning of the Gangtok-Nathula road in Sikkim is included under Special Accelerated Development Programme of Ministry of Shipping Road Transport & Highways.

(b) and (c) Government of Sikkim have requested Government of India

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.